

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5139

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As Reported By House Committee On:  
State Government

**Title:** An act relating to consolidation of the state capital historical association and the Washington state historical society.

**Brief Description:** Consolidating the state capital historical association and the state historical society.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fraser, Wojahn, Prentice, Haugen, von Reichbauer, Williams, Winsley, Roach and McAuliffe; by request of Office of Financial Management, Washington State Historical Society and State Capital Historical Association.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
State Government, March 18, 1993, DP.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King; and Pruitt.

**Staff:** Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

**Background:** Washington currently has three state historical societies: the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma; the Eastern Washington State Historical Society in Spokane; and the State Capital Historical Association (SCHA) in Olympia. These societies are responsible for operating state museums, collecting and preserving historical materials, planning for and conducting state historical celebrations, and promoting cultural, educational, and artistic activities related to the state's history.

Each historical society is governed by its own board of trustees. The director of each society is appointed by its governing board with the consent of the governor. The Washington State Heritage Council oversees all of the historical societies. Funding for each society includes state general fund appropriations, membership fees, and federal or private grants and gifts.

In 1992, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) requested that agencies come up with efficiencies in the delivery of state services. This request has resulted in the proposed merger of the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma, and the SCHA in Olympia. The merger will result in operational efficiencies in agency accounting, payroll, personnel, and audit functions.

**Summary of Bill:** The State Capital Historical Association (SCHA) is abolished and its powers, duties, and functions are transferred to the Washington State Historical Society. All documents, records, written material, assets, funds, office equipment, and tangible property in the possession of the SCHA are transferred to the Washington State Historical Society. All SCHA employees are transferred in accordance with state civil service and collective bargaining laws. All rules, pending business, contracts, and obligations of the SCHA will be continued and acted on by the Washington State Historical Society. The director of OFM will be responsible for resolving questions arising from the transfer.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1993.

**Testimony For:** This merger will save money and improve program coordination. All of the parties strongly favor the merger. A memorandum of understanding has been developed detailing that the unique missions and programs of the two entities will be preserved. Duplication is eliminated. The staff of both organizations are already beginning to work together on exhibits in anticipation of the merger.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Senator Karen Fraser, prime sponsor (pro); Chuck Fowler (pro); Derek Valley, Washington State Capital Museum (pro); and Bob Mack, Washington State Historical Society (pro).